

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for ensuring the authenticity of electronic documents generated during E-commerce transactions, said method comprising the steps of:

4 enabling automatic transmittal of an electronic
5 document to an electronic depository in response to a
6 completion of an E-commerce transaction in which said
7 electronic document is created; and

storing said electronic document in said electronic depository.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said storing step further includes the steps of:

generating a document ID for said electronic document; and

5 providing said document ID within a confirmation
6 receipt to each party of said E-commerce transaction.

1 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein said electronic
2 document is a contract between a buyer and merchant
3 entered into on a web server of said merchant and said
4 enabling step includes the steps of:

transferring an electronic document when said document is created during an E-commerce transaction; and

linking said modified web server to said depository.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein said enabling step further includes the step of utilizing a web browser application of a buyer to create a link to said depository when said buyer enters into an E-commerce transaction.

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3 5. An electronic database used as a depository for electronic documents generated during E-commerce transactions, comprising:

4 means for automatically receiving an electronic document after an E-commerce transaction has completed;

6 means for generating a document ID for said received
7 E-commerce document; and

8 means for storing said electronic document.

5 6. The electronic database of Claim 5, wherein said means for generating said document ID further includes means for transmitting said document ID to each party to said E-commerce transaction, which produced said electronic document.

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5 7. The electronic database of Claim 5, wherein said means for storing further comprises:

6 means for allowing a later read access to said E-commerce document by a party to said E-commerce transaction; and

7 means for preventing modifications to said E-commerce document after it has been stored.

1 8. A computer program product for ensuring authenticity
2 of electronic documents generated during E-commerce
3 transactions, comprising:

4 a computer readable storage medium; and

5 program instructions on said computer readable
6 storage medium for:

7 connecting an Internet client to an electronic
8 depository and a merchant web server;

9 displaying an E-commerce transaction between
10 said Internet client and said merchant web server via a
11 graphical user interface of said Internet client;

12 automatically forwarding to said electronic
13 depository a copy of an electronic document generated
14 during said E-commerce transaction.

15 9. The computer program product of Claim 8, further
16 including program instructions for:

17 tagging said electronic document with a read and
18 write access, wherein said electronic document is stored
19 at said depository in a write-once, read-many format;

20 generating a document identifier (ID) to identify
21 said electronic document; and

22 allowing later retrieval of said electronic document
23 utilizing said document ID.

10. The computer program product of Claim 9, wherein said program instructions for generating said document ID includes program instructions for transmitting said document ID to the other party to said E-commerce transaction and to said depository.

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1 11. A depository for ensuring the authenticity of
2 electronic documents generated during E-commerce
3 transactions, said depository comprising:

4 means for enabling automatic receipt of an
5 electronic document, in response to a completion of an E-
6 commerce transaction in which said electronic document is
7 created; and

8 means for storing said electronic document in said
9 electronic depository.

10 12. The depository of Claim 11, wherein said storing
11 means includes:

12 means for limiting a write access of said electronic
13 document to a first access; and

14 means for restricting subsequent access to said
15 document to read-only access, such that no changes may be
16 made to said electronic document once it has been stored.

17 13. The depository of Claim 11, further including:

18 means for controlling a read and write access to
19 said electronic depository, wherein said document is
20 stored in a write-once, read-many format;

12 means for generating a document identifier (ID), to
13 identify said electronic document; and

14 means for later retrieving said electronic document
15 for a party to said E-commerce transaction.

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2 14. The depository of Claim 13 wherein said controlling
3 means further includes:

4 2 means for enabling a non-modification function for
5 3 said electronic document, wherein a control code of said
6 4 electronic depository is activated to prevent later
7 5 modification to said electronic document; and

8 6 means for flagging electronic document within said
9 7 electronic depository to allow a later read access to
10 8 said E-commerce document by a party to said E-commerce
11 9 transaction.

1 15. A computer program product for ensuring the
2 authenticity of electronic documents generated during E-
3 commerce transactions, said program product comprising:

4 a computer readable medium; and

5 program instructions stored on said computer
6 readable medium, including:

7 program means for enabling automatic receipt of an
8 electronic document, in response to a completion of an E-
9 commerce transaction in which said electronic document is
10 created; and

11 program means for storing said electronic document
12 in said electronic depository.

13 16. The computer program product of Claim 15, wherein
14 said storing means includes:

15 program means for limiting a write access of said
16 electronic document to a first access; and

17 program means for restricting subsequent access to
18 said document to read-only access, such that no changes
19 may be made to said electronic document once it has been
20 stored.

17. The computer program product of Claim 15, further including:

program means for controlling a read and write access to said electronic depository, wherein said document is stored in a write-once, read-many format;

program means for generating a document identifier (ID), to identify said electronic document; and

program means for later retrieving said electronic document for a party to said e-commerce transaction.

18. The computer program product of Claim 17 wherein said controlling means further includes:

program means for enabling a non-modification function for said electronic document, wherein a control code of said electronic depository is activated to prevent later modification to said electronic document; and

program means for flagging electronic document within said electronic depository to allow a later read access to said E-commerce document by a party to said E-commerce transaction.

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